

Appropriations Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Room 2700, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

February 19, 2013

Dear Appropriations Committee Honored Members:

I urge you to remain steadfast in your full support of Connecticut's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. It is a false lure to believe there will be a finding of efficiency if you consolidate various commissions. In the end, you will find a considerable decrease in efficiency and effectiveness.

First, the Commission on the Status of Women is a brand that is recognizable across the entire country and the world. The product would be lost in the shuffle financially, politically, as well as realistically for the state of Connecticut. Women would find a losses and reduction in all aspects of history, experience, resources, grant writing capacity, research, and outreach.

Second, there are many significant challenges to consolidating diverse programming staff, resources, programs, material, and records. I personally had my own position eliminated as an executive director of a municipal commission for women then promoted to provide oversight of multiple constituencies through various commissions. Initially, the plan was to eliminate five staff and have two full time staff. After the consolidation, I was the only one placed in the office. The slack must be taken up by volunteer commissioners in a time when most people are significantly eliminating their volunteerism. Without significant planning and orchestration, it would be a major amputation of capacity to lose the PCSW not only to Connecticut's women but the entire national advancement of women.

Finally, the PCSW provides exceptional services to women through research and advocacy. Women face documented hurdles to economic sustainability during and following domestic violence, escaping poverty as single heads of households, and struggling with disabilities or aging complications. PCSW lifts up examples of residents who can highlight what individuals or groups face daily so that we can improve the system for all.

Please protect the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women in order to protect the women, families, and people of Connecticut.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sonja Darai', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Sonja Darai

64 Bow Street, Somerville MA 02143